

PROJECT OBJECTIVES, GOALS, AND IMPLEMENTATION (POGI)

Youth Ambassadors Program North America, Central America, Caribbean ECA/PE/C/PY-10-29

Office of Citizen Exchanges Youth Programs Division

The POGI guidelines apply specifically to the Request for Grant Proposals (RFGP) issued by the Youth Programs Division for the Youth Ambassadors Program. The proposals must conform to the RFGP, the Guidelines stated in this document, and the standard Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI). An application not adhering to the conditions set forth herein may be deemed technically ineligible. These guidelines are specific to the program mentioned above and are IN ADDITION TO the guidelines outlined in the PSI. If there is a perceived disparity between the standard and program specific Guidelines and the program information supplied in the accompanying RFGP, the RFGP is to be the dominant reference.

This document not only provides guidance for the preparation of a proposal for the Youth Ambassadors Program but also establishes guidelines for the implementation of the grants.

I. STATEMENT OF WORK

The U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) and the Public Affairs Sections (PAS) of the U.S. Embassies in North America, Central America and the Caribbean are supporting the participation of high school youth and adult educators in intensive, substantive three-week exchanges in the United States and select partner countries.

The exchange activities will introduce the participants to a comprehensive survey of community activism, civic education, and leadership. Activities will focus on building their knowledge and skill levels in these areas. The students and educators will participate in workshops, community service activities, meetings with community leaders, and discussion groups and will have opportunities for substantive interaction with each other and the peers of the host country.

The responsibilities of the grant recipient for each project will be the following:

- 1) Recruitment and Selection
 - a) Conduct an open, merit-based competition for youth and adult exchange participants in the partner country(ies), in cooperation with the Public Affairs Sections, with clearly identified criteria for the selection and a formal process.
 - b) If an exchange from the United States to a partner country is part of the project, conduct an open, merit-based competition for exchange participants from the United States with clearly identified criteria for the selection and a formal process.
 - c) Develop plans for outreach and recruitment of both students and educators that will

- generate a strong pool of qualified candidates that represent the diversity of their country.
- d) Develop applications for students and adult educators in consultation with ECA and our overseas representatives.
 - e) Administer an effective language screening process, as appropriate.
 - f) Recommend the final participants and alternates. No invitations may be issued without the Department of State clearance (ECA and PAS).

2) Preparation

- a) Contact participants before the program to provide them with program information, pre-departure materials, and to gather information about their specific interests.
- b) Facilitate the passport and J-1 visa application process for the foreign participants, working with ECA and PAS, and secure visas for the U.S. participants, as needed.
- c) Conduct a pre-departure orientation for participants, including general and program-specific information, as well as intercultural training.
- d) Make housing arrangements. Carefully recruit, screen, and select diverse local host families to offer homestays (lodging and meals) to the participants for the majority of the exchange period. Monitor housing arrangements to ensure the health and safety of participants.
- e) Orient host institutions, staff, and families to the goals of the program and to the cultures and sensitivities of the visitors.
- f) Make arrangements for interpreters, as needed.
- g) Make all round-trip international (complying with the Fly America Act) and domestic travel arrangements for the participants.

3) Exchange Activities

- a) Design, plan, and implement an intensive and substantive three-week exchange program on the stated themes. Exchange activities must promote program goals. Activities will be school and community-based, as appropriate to the project. Recruit peers from the host country to be engaged in activities with the exchange participants.
- b) Provide opportunities for the adult participants to work with their peers and other professionals, volunteers, and youth advocates with whom they can discuss the support of youth development.
- c) Arrange appropriate community, cultural, social, and civic activities.
- d) Engage participants in at least two community service activities during the exchange. The program should provide context for the participants – identifying community needs, volunteerism, charitable giving, etc. – and a debriefing so that the service activity is not an isolated event and helps participants see how to apply the experience at home.
- e) Provide day-to-day monitoring of the participants' well-being, preventing and dealing with any misunderstandings or adjustment issues that may arise in a timely manner.
- f) Provide a closing session to summarize project activities, prepare participants for their return home, and plan for the future.

4) Follow-on activities

- a) Conduct follow-on activities with program alumni that reinforce values and skills imparted during the exchange program and help them apply what they have learned to

- serve their schools and communities.
 - b) Support alumni in making presentations or preparing articles to share their experiences once they return home.
 - c) Applicants should present creative and effective ways to address project themes, for both program participants and their peers, as a means to amplify program impact.
 - d) [Optional] Arrange visits by project staff, trainers, or educators to further the training started during the exchange.
- 5) Design and implement an evaluation plan that assesses the impact of the program (See section IV.3d.3 of the RFGP).
 - 6) Work in consultation with ECA and PAS in the implementation of the program, provide timely reporting of progress to ECA and PAS, and comply with financial and program reporting requirements.
 - 7) Manage all financial aspects of the program, including stipend disbursements to the participants and management of sub-grant relationships with partner organizations.

The responsibilities of the Department of State will be the following:

- 1) Provide advice and assistance to the grantee organization staff.
- 2) Approve final slate of candidates.
- 3) Issue DS-2019 forms and J-1 visas for the foreign participants. All foreign participants will travel on a U.S. Government designation for the J Exchange Visitor Program.
- 4) Enroll participants in an accident and sickness health benefits program.
- 5) Approve final calendar of exchange activities.
- 6) Arrange meetings with Department of State officials in Washington, D.C. and the partner countries.
- 7) Monitor and evaluate the program, through regular communication with the grantee institution and one or more site visits.

II. PROGRAM SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

Partner Organizations: Applicants must have the organizational capacity in the relevant countries necessary to implement the in-country activities, to recruit and select participants for the program, to provide follow-on activities, and to organize a program for the U.S. participants, if specified. This capacity may take the form of a branch office of the U.S. applicant organization, a non-governmental partner organization, or other associate with demonstrated experience in educational exchange that can coordinate the program nationally. For the Caribbean only, a partner could cover multiple countries, provided it has the ability to work effectively in each country from which participants will be drawn. Grant recipients will be responsible for their partners' activities under the grant, both programmatically and financially. All applicants need to identify their representation in the partner countries and describe their

partners' responsibilities and qualifications.

Participants: The participants will be high school students between the ages of 15 and 18 at the start of the exchange who:

- have a demonstrated leadership aptitude and an interest in community service and in the project theme;
- have sufficient proficiency in English to participate fully in all exchange activities (for the North America and Caribbean projects, with the exception of Haiti);
- have sufficient proficiency in Spanish to participate fully in all exchange activities (for the Central America projects, both U.S. and foreign participants);
- exhibit flexibility, maturity, integrity, good social skills, and open-mindedness;
- have the motivation necessary to be active and successful exchange participants; and
- will attend at least one more year of secondary school after the exchange program

The adult participants will be teachers or community leaders who work with youth, who have demonstrated an interest in assisting youth to become productive and responsible members of society, exhibit maturity and open-mindedness, will be supportive of the teenage participants, and are expected to remain in teaching positions or other positions of influence on young leaders. They must be carefully selected and thoroughly briefed on their roles during the project. Although they are to be full exchange participants, they will also serve as chaperones to some extent. They will have program sessions with the youth, as well as separate program activities for adults. It is important that they be prepared to allow the students to be vocal, candid, and active participants who do not feel they need to defer to the teacher. At the same time, their shared experience with the students will allow them to serve as adult advocates for the alumni once they have returned home.

Preference should be given to individuals who have not previously traveled to the United States, or the partner country, especially on a U.S. government-sponsored program. Once the grants are awarded, the grant recipients must consult with the Embassy staff in the partner countries to review their recruitment plans in detail, any specific selection criteria, and the screening and selection process. Recruitment efforts should be designed to attract quality applicants that appropriately represent the diverse groups present in the partner country. A particular emphasis should be placed on selecting participants from underserved or disadvantaged populations, including public high schools in order to reach beyond the elite. Geographic, socio-economic, and ethnic diversity is important, including outreach to indigenous and Afro-descendent populations.

It is desirable that two-to-three participants attend the same school or live in the same community so that they can support each other upon their return home. The ratio of student to adult participants will be between 5:1 and 10:1, depending on the size of the exchange delegation.

Orientations: The grant recipient will conduct pre-departure and welcome orientations for the participants to introduce them to the host community and to prepare them for the activities ahead. The orientations should include a general political, historical, educational, and cultural

introduction to the United States or to the partner country, plus information related specifically to the objectives and themes of the program, as well as practical and administrative information. The U.S. Embassy should be invited to participate in pre-departure orientation.

Exchange Program: The program delivery should be primarily interactive activities, practical experiences, and other opportunities to learn about the fundamentals of civil society, community activism, and building leadership skills, enabling the students and teachers to get a hands-on feel for the topic and to re-create similar activities for their peers back home. The Bureau urges applicants to present innovative, resourceful, and effective programming ideas. Applicants should justify their choices by explaining how their program plan will meet the stated goals.

The activities could include a mix of workshops or training sessions, simulations and role-playing, teambuilding exercises, case studies, volunteer service, leadership training, meetings, classroom visits, site visits, and social time among peers. Many of these should be planned in conjunction with participation in school and community activities in a way that is mutually educational for the exchange participants and their hosts/peers. Exchange participants should not attend classes in a school for more than a few days without a direct purpose in supporting program goals. All programming should include host country participants wherever possible. Cultural and recreational activities will balance the schedule. The program will also provide opportunities for the adult educators to work with their peers and other professionals and volunteers to learn about new topics and methods in education and support for youth activism.

In the United States, each project will include 4 to 7 days in Washington, D.C., for educational activities that focus on the U.S. political system and citizen involvement in public life. This time should also include a visit to the U.S. Department of State to provide exposure to U.S. foreign policy as it relates to the participants' country of origin. This segment and the remaining weeks in communities outside Washington, D.C. will include a variety of activities and will offer the participants exposure to the diversity of American life. In the selected partner countries, similar organizations and activities will be utilized for an equally robust educational experience for the U.S. exchange participants.

Examples of the kinds of program activities that may be included:

- Community service/volunteer activities
- Exercises related to increasing tolerance and cooperation and developing strategies for future collaboration and cooperation among participants
- Dialogues, simulations, role plays and other activities aimed at helping participants articulate their thoughts about the project's themes
- Meetings with government, community, and business leaders
- Teambuilding exercises
- Leadership development with workshop trainers or through organizations such as Boys and Girls Clubs of America, 4-H, and FFA
- Computer training that emphasizes research, critical thinking and analysis, and the use of the computer and Internet as resources in education and business

- Visits to historical sites, government and community centers, museums and landmarks that combine learning about principals of government, history, and society with tourism
- Conferences and training opportunities with youth from the partner country
- Sports, drama, fine arts, musical, camping and other extracurricular activities which provide opportunities for participants to work and play together

Exchanges will end with a closing session that focuses on summarizing the experience, developing action plans for activities at home, and preparing for re-entry. The participants will be encouraged and assisted in developing projects to implement on their return home. The ideas and action plans should spring from the participants, but the project staff should be prepared to assist and direct the participants in developing these plans both during the exchange and during the follow-on period.

Sites: In addition to visiting Washington, D.C. (or the capital city of the host country), the delegations should spend their time in no more than one or two locations so that the participants have time to familiarize themselves with a community. Applicant organizations should describe the rationale for their location selections. The Bureau encourages applicants to consider proximity to sites of historical or cultural interest, access to organizations that can conduct appropriate workshops, and representation of the diversity of the host country.

Accommodations: In the United States, homestays with local families must be arranged for at least half and preferably more of the exchange period. In the partner countries, homestays are strongly encouraged whenever feasible. The grant recipient organizations will recruit, screen, and orient host families. Diversity will be a key factor in choosing host families. A dormitory, hotel, or other housing with appropriate chaperones is an acceptable arrangement for brief segments of the program such as the welcome orientation, the capital city program, the closing session, or special workshops.

Follow-on Activities for Alumni: The grant recipient will design activities for alumni, such as mini-grants or online collaborative projects, and mentor them in their implementation of these activities. The Bureau seeks creative ideas to ensure that the alumni can effectively pursue the remaining activities of the program, particularly ideas that amplify the program impact through their peers. Alumni programming in the form of seminars, newsletters, and listservs provides critical program follow-on and serves to maximize and extend the benefit of the participants' program in the United States and the host country. Alumni tracking is crucial for the evaluation of the program and for the implementation of follow-on programs. All alumni contact information gathered by the grant recipients on behalf of this program must be made available to the Department of State. Please refer to the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) for additional guidance.

Evaluation: The Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) of 1993 requires that federal agencies measure the results of their programs in meeting performance goals. The proposal should demonstrate the applicant's plan to measure the long-term impact of the program. The follow-on activities will provide an opportunity to assess the impact of the exchanges on the

participants, to determine how their attitudes have changed, and to evaluate the acquisition of knowledge and skills associated with program themes.

Other notes: The recipient organization is responsible for all components of the program outlined in this document. In addition, the Bureau requires recipient organizations to communicate with the Public Affairs Sections of the relevant U.S. Embassies in the participating countries on a regular basis about program activities, including recruitment, selection and orientations, publicity, and follow-on activities. The organization must also inform the ECA program officer of their progress at each stage of the project's implementation in a timely fashion. All materials and correspondence related to the program will acknowledge this as a program of the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. The Bureau will retain copyright use of and can distribute materials related to this program as it sees fit.

III. PROPOSAL CONTENTS

Applicants should submit a complete and thorough proposal describing the program in a convincing and comprehensive manner. Since there is no opportunity for applicants to meet with reviewing officials, the proposal should respond to the criteria set forth in the solicitation and other guidelines as clearly as possible. The proposal should address succinctly, but completely, the elements described below and must follow all format requirements. The proposal should include the following items:

TAB A - Application for Federal Assistance Cover Sheet (SF-424)

TAB B - Executive Summary

In one double-spaced page, provide the following information about the project:

1. Identification of applicant, partner countries, and participating organizations
2. Identification of the Project(s)
3. Overview of exchange participants
4. Beginning and ending dates of the exchanges
5. Proposed themes
6. Nature of activity and venues
7. Funding level requested from the Bureau, program cost, total cost-sharing from applicant and other sources

Note: An applicant organization must distinguish one project from the other by clearly presenting the partner countries and the partner organizations in each country. It should also identify the dates, venues, and activities of each Project in the Executive Summary. These distinctions should follow through in the Narrative and the Budget.

TAB C - Narrative

Within 20 double-spaced, single sided pages, provide a detailed description of the project

addressing the areas listed below. In the narrative, applicants should not only describe major program activities but also explain and justify their programmatic choices.

1. **Vision:** Describe the project objectives and the desired outcomes, i.e., the knowledge, skills, and/or attitudinal changes that the participants will acquire.
2. **Participating Organizations:** Identify any partner organizations for the program, their roles, and the applicant's reasons for including them.
3. **Recruitment, Screening, and Selection:** Describe how the applicant will coordinate with the embassy in a recruitment and selection plan. Present a plan for advertising the program. Outline both the process and the criteria by which finalists will be selected. Identify who is responsible for selection.
4. **Project Activities:** Describe the components of the exchanges, including project planning, orientations, manifestation of the project themes, educational activities, cultural activities, meetings, site visits, community service, and the closing session. A detailed outline of the three-week exchanges should be included as an appendix in Tab E. Also, describe support for follow-on activities.
5. **Travel, Housing, and Other Logistics:** Detail how the applicant will arrange international travel (in compliance with the Fly America Act); domestic travel; homestays and other housing arrangements; ground transportation; stipend disbursement; and relevant administrative matters.
6. **Program Monitoring and Evaluation:** The progress of the grant should be monitored closely and ECA and PAS must be kept informed of activities. In the submitted proposal, applicants should include a plan describing how success in meeting the stated goals of the program will be measured and reported. ECA recommends that the proposal include a draft survey questionnaire or other technique.
7. **Diversity:** Explain how the program managers will be pro-active in supporting diversity in participant selection and in program content, demonstrating how diversity can contribute to a vibrant civil society. Diversity should be defined broadly and should include geographic, urban/rural, ethnic, racial, socio-economic, and religious diversity.
8. **Institutional Capacity and Project Management:** Outline the applicant organization's capacity for doing projects of this nature, focusing on three areas of competency: provision of educational and thematic programs, age-appropriate programming for youth, and previous work in the region. Describe the program staffing (individuals and responsibilities), qualifications, structure, and resources. If applicable, include this information for primary partner organizations as well.
9. **Work Plan/Schedule:** Outline the phases of the project planning and implementation for the entire grant period. Provide a draft schedule of daily activities of the exchanges in an appendix.

TAB D - Budget Submission

The maximum level of funding available for this program is \$3,000,000, which will support three or four grants for exchanges between the United States and 17+ countries. The Bureau reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds.

The available funding may be used to support the program and administrative costs necessary to implement the program as described in this solicitation. Please submit a comprehensive line item budget, as stated in the Proposal Submission Instructions. An explanatory budget narrative must also be included. For clarification, any applicant applying to implement more than one project should provide separate sub-budgets for each program component, phase, location, or activity.

Suggested program costs include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Staff travel
- Application and educational materials
- Participant travel (international, domestic, ground transportation, passport and visa fees)
- Orientations
- Cultural and social activities
- Meeting costs
- Lodging, when not in homestay
- Food (primarily group meals)
- Interpreters, if necessary
- Follow-on activities
- Evaluation
- Pocket money for participants' incidental expenses
- Other justifiable expenses directly related to supporting program activities

Significant cost sharing is expected and will enhance the proposal. Stipends for homestays or for host families are not allowed as a grant-funded or cost-share item. While there is no rigid ratio of administrative to program costs, the Bureau urges applicants to keep administrative costs as low and reasonable as possible. Proposals should show strong administrative cost sharing contributions from the applicant, the in-country partner, and other sources.

Maximum limits on grant funding are as follows: Books and educational materials allowance-\$100 per participant; Conference room rental costs-\$250 per day per room; Consultant fees and honoraria-\$250/day; Cultural allowance-\$150 per participant; Per diem-standard government rates; Evaluation costs- 3% of the grant. Organizations are encouraged to cost-share any rates that exceed these amounts.

Please note that there are no fees for the J-1 visas that foreign participants will use to enter the United States. Applicants should budget for applicants to travel to the U.S. Embassy or Consulate for visa interviews. Exchange participants will be enrolled in the Bureau's Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE) to provide them with health benefits during the exchange; this cost does not need to be included in the budget. More information on ASPE is available at <http://www.usdos.sevencorners.com>.

Please refer to the PSI for allowable costs and complete budget guidelines and formatting instructions.

TAB E

- *Letters of commitment.* Include pledges to participate in the program's implementation from significant partner organizations, including those in the partner country and any receiving a sub-award.
- *Resumes* of all program staff should be included in the submission. No one resume should exceed two pages.
- *Attachments/appendices* (please limit to those materials essential for understanding the proposed program such as a draft schedule, application forms, or evaluation questionnaires).

TAB F

- 1.) SF-424B, "Assurances - Nonconstruction Programs".
- 2.) First time applicant organizations and organizations which have not received an assistance award (grant or cooperative agreement) from the Bureau during the past three (3) years, must submit as an attachment to this form the following: (a) one copy of their Charter OR Articles of Incorporation; (b) a list of the current Board of Directors; and (c) current financial statements. Note: The Bureau retains the right to ask for additional documentation of those items included on this form.
- 3.) **Please note:** Effective January 7, 2009, all applicants for ECA federal assistance awards must include in their application the names of directors and/or senior executives (current officers, trustees, and key employees, regardless of amount of compensation). In fulfilling this requirement, applicants must submit information in one of the following ways:

Those who file Internal Revenue Service Form 990, "Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax," must include a copy of relevant portions of this form.

Those who do not file IRS Form 990 must submit information above in the format of their choice.

In addition to final program reporting requirements, award recipients will also be required to submit a one-page document, derived from their program reports, listing and describing their grant activities. For award recipients, the names of directors and/or senior executives (current officers, trustees, and key employees), as well as the one- page description of grant activities, will be transmitted by the State Department to OMB, along with other information required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), and will be made available to the public by the Office of Management and Budget on its USASpending.gov website as part of ECA's FFATA reporting requirements.

- 4.) Include other attachments, if applicable, i.e. the SF-LLL form, etc.

IV. APPLICATION SUBMISSION

Please refer to Section IV.3F of the RFGP document for specific information regarding the application deadline and methods of submission. For further information on the program or the proposal submission, contact the Youth Programs Division program officer Jennifer Phillips, Telephone: (202) 632-9352; Fax: (202) 632-9355; e-mail address: PhillipsJA@state.gov.